[21st December 1953

[*Note.*—**An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.**]

II.—POINT OF ORDER *RE* CHIEF MINISTER'S REPLY TO A SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION.

SRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN :—" Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. So far as the procedure of this House is concerned, you, Sir, Mr. Speaker, are the person who is the custodian of the privileges of Members of this House and it is for you, Mr. Speaker, to decide whether a question is proper or improper. It is for you to check up a question and say whether it is right or wrong. I suppose it is not up to the Finance Minister or the Chief Minister to say that a question is proper or improper. The Hon. Chief Minister while replying to a supplementary question put by me to the Hon. the Finance Minister has replied that my question is an ' improper one ' and as such the Government do not propose to answer it. I want to know whether an Hon. Minister, be he the Chief Minister or not, can characterize the supplementary question of an hon. Member of this House as ' improper '."

MR. SPEAKER :—" A Minister can refuse to answer a question on public grounds."

SRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN :—" That may be, Sir. But here the Chief Minister did not say ' I cannot answer that question or anything like that '. He said : ' The question that has been put is *improper* and as such the Government do not propose to answer it '. That is why I want to know whether the Chief Minister can reply to the question of an hon. Member of this House characterizing the same as ' improper ' when the proper person to decide whether a question is proper or improper is the Hon. Speaker and no one else."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member ought to have brought this to my attention then and there. On the other hand, he is bringing it up now when we have passed over several questions after that."

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" May I submit, Sir, that the Chief Minister and other Ministers of the Government can refuse to answer a question and ordinary courtesy requires that whenever they do so they should give a reason for their not answering that question. The question that had been referred to was not proper since that question involved an assumption of difference of opinion on a particular matter and in a particular way between one Minister and another. I had to give the reason. If only I had allowed my colleague to answer, I thought he would have replied that the assumption was wrong altogether which would mean the disclosure of facts as to any difference of opinion between us. I did not want to create a precedent for that kind of answer. Therefore I said that the question was improper and therefore the Government were not prepared to answer it. If only I had simply kept quiet it would have meant that I had accepted the charge."

21st December 1953]

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—" ஒரு கேள்விக்கு பதில் கூறுவது அல்லது பதில் கூறாமல் இருப்பது என்பதற்கு சர்க்காரிடத்தில் போதிய காரணங்கள் இருக்கலாம். ஆனால் சபை சம்பந்தப்பட்ட மட்டிலும் ஜனங்கள் சம்பந்தப்பட்ட மட்டிலும் ஒரு கேள்விக்கு மறுப்பு அளிக்கவோ அல்லது பதில் சொல்லாமல் இருக்கவோ காரணம் கொடுக்கமுடியும். பொது ஜனங்களின் நலனை உத்தேசித்தோ அல்லது நாட்டின் நலனை உத்தேசித்தோ ஒரு கேள்விக்குக் காரணம் காட்டி பதில் கொடுக்க மறுக்கலாம். ஆனால் அந்தக் கேள்விக் சரியா தப்பா அல்லது தவறானதா என்டதை நிர்ணயிக்கும்படியான பொறுப்பு சர்க்காருக்கு இல்லை. அது சபா நாயகருக்குத்தான் உகந்ததாகும். ஒரு கேள்விக்கு பதில் சொல்ல மறுக்கலாமேயொழிய அது சரி அல்லது தப்பு என்று நிர்ணயிக்கும் பொறுப்பு சர்க்காருக்குக் கிடையாது, அது சபா நாயகருக்குத்தான் உண்டு. அந்தக் கேள்வி தவறு என்று பதிலளிக்கும் அதிகாரம் சர்க்காருக்கு இல்லை என்பதை மட்டும் நான் தெரிவித்துக் கொள்ளுகிறேன்."

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" With due deference to the Leader of the Opposition, might I say that he has put very ably the case for the Gentleman in the back-benches behind me. At the same time, I must say that if only I had answered as the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has suggested, it would have led to a grave ambiguity and misconstruction of facts. It would have meant that the charges were correct when as a matter of fact the charges were not correct and it was not proper to go into those charges."

III.—GOVERNMENT MOTION.

MOTION UNDER RULE 22 (3) OF THE ASSEMBLY RULES VARYING THE ORDER OF DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, I beg to move—

'*That the Demands for Grants for the second six months of the year* 1953–54 *be taken up in the order set out below :—*

I—Land Revenue.

VII—General Sales Tax and Other Taxes and Duties Administration.

VIII—Irrigation.

XV—Education.

XVII—Public Health.

XVIII—Agriculture and Fisheries.

XXII—Harijan Uplift.

XXIII—Labour including Factories.

XXXII—Community Development Projects.

XX—Co-operation.

XIII—Jails.

XXXIII—Road Transport Schemes—Working Expenses (Tramways).

and the rest of the Demands for Grants be taken up in the order in which they appear in the Notice, dated 14*th December* 1953.' "